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## Strength in Unity

**A**s we journey through life, the connections we make along the way play a crucial role in shaping our experiences and enriching our existence. Finding our tribe—a community of people who resonate with our values and aspirations—is a powerful testament to the human spirit's innate desire for connection and belonging.

Our magazine has always been more than just a collection of articles and features; it is a bridge that connects like-minded individuals who share a passion for health, wellness and sustainability. Through your engagement, feedback and participation, we have created a vibrant community that thrives on mutual respect, support and shared values.

The journey of publishing this magazine has allowed us to connect with so many wonderful people. Each issue we publish is not just about sharing information, but about building a bridge to like-minded individuals who care about health, wellness and sustainability. The stories you share, the events we cover and the feedback you provide have all contributed to a sense of belonging and purpose. Your engagement has helped us realize the power of community and the incredible impact we can have when we come together.

Finding our tribe is about more than shared interests; it is about a

shared sense of purpose. It is about coming together to support each other, to lift each other up and to create a space where everyone feels valued and heard. Our community is a reflection of our collective strength and our commitment to making a positive impact in southeast Michigan and around the world.

As we continue to grow and evolve, let's remember the importance of nurturing these connections. Let's celebrate the diversity within our community and embrace the unique contributions each member brings. Together, we can build a future where everyone feels empowered to be their authentic selves.

The power of our community lies in our collective efforts. By supporting one another, we can overcome challenges, achieve our dreams and create a brighter future for all. Your participation and dedication are what make our community thrive, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Together, we are creating something truly special—a circle of support that enriches our lives and the lives of those around us. Let's continue to nurture and grow this incredible community.

With gratitude and warm regards,

HEALTHY LIVING HEALTHY PLANET

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### Advertising & Submissions

*Natural Awakenings* is a network of natural lifestyle magazine publishers empowering local communities with knowledge, resources and connections to lead healthier lives on a healthy planet.

## New Moon Neuro Brings Advanced Neurofeedback to Chelsea

New Moon Neuro, the only IASIS Micro Current Neurofeedback (MCN) provider in southeast Michigan, announces the expansion of its practice in downtown Chelsea. In May, New Moon Neuro opened ALCHEMY Holistic Collective, offering

treatments to adults and children. MCN, a milder, quicker and more affordable alternative to traditional neurofeedback, has proven benefits for conditions such as ADD, OCD, PTSD, addiction, trauma, insomnia, anxiety, depression, migraines and TBI recovery. Clients with autoimmune disorders, Lyme disease, chronic pain conditions and high blood pressure also report significant improvements.

MCN technology is non-invasive, drug-free and FDA-approved, supporting the central nervous system by allowing the brain to heal itself. Clinical studies demonstrate its efficacy, with ongoing research into its benefits for PTSD, drug recovery, Alzheimer's and anxiety. Nicole and Brandon Leffler, co-founders of New Moon Neuro and ALCHEMY, are Certified IASIS providers with decades of experience in holistic wellness and IT.

The ALCHEMY Holistic Collective offers various services, including reiki, sound healing, Brain Gauge Assessment and PandoraStar Light Journey. New Moon Neuro provides intake and first treatment sessions, with ongoing sessions available in packages. Discounts are offered for families, veterans, first responders, medical professionals, teachers and students.

*Location: 105 E. Middle St., Chelsea. To schedule an appointment or for more information, call 734-210-1922 or visit [NewMoonNeuro.com](http://NewMoonNeuro.com). See ad page 9.*

## Annual Sunflower Festival Returns to Dexter

The annual Sunflower Festival will return to Dexter from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on August 17. This family-friendly event promises a day of sunflower picking, creative activities, local crafts and delicious food.

The festival features over three acres of sunflowers, offering visitors a chance to explore fields filled with towering sunflowers and charming dwarf varieties perfect for children. Attendees can enjoy sunflower picking, strolling through the fields to pick their favorite blooms. Additional bunches are available for \$5 or \$20 per bucket, with pre-picked bundles also offered. The DIY Crafts & Bouquet Bar allows guests to unleash their creativity at the craft station, making dried flower wreaths, sachets and custom bouquets. The U-Pick Flower Field offers the opportunity to cut your own bouquet from a diverse



Brandon Leffler conducting a neurofeedback session

flower selection. At the Local Gifts and Artisan Market, visitors can discover locally produced goods, seasonal produce and unique gifts. Vendors will present handmade products and edible treats from local artisans, while food trucks provide a variety of delicious food options. Additionally, a Kids & Toddler Play Area will feature fun activities designed specifically for the youngest visitors.



Admission to the festival is \$5 per person, with children under 12 admitted for free. Sunflower picking incurs an additional charge. Parking is available on-site, with clear signage directing guests to the fields.

The Sunflower Festival aims to bring the community together for a day of fun and creativity. It offers a wonderful opportunity for families to enjoy the beauty of nature, engage in creative activities and support local vendors.

The farm prides itself on being all-natural, using no synthetic herbicides, pesticides or chemicals, and is committed to sustainable and eco-friendly farming practices.

*Location: 475 N. Fletcher Rd., Dexter. For more information, call 517-250-1222 or visit [JacobsFreshFarm.com](http://JacobsFreshFarm.com).*

## Ann Arbor Welcomes Toastique's Health-Focused Café

Toastique invites the community to join in celebrating the grand opening of its first Ann Arbor location from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., on August 10. Toastique, an East-Coast-based toast and juice café, brings its health-focused menu to Ann Arbor, conveniently located near the University of Michigan.



The grand opening will be a day filled with fun and delicious offerings. The first 100 guests in line will receive \$50 in Toastique rewards dollars, redeemable on future visits with a minimum purchase of \$10.

Toastique is a health-focused café dedicated to providing fresh, wholesome, and delicious food options. Their menu includes gourmet toasts, smoothies, cold-pressed juices, coffees, and more, all made from high-quality ingredients. Toastique is committed to promoting a balanced lifestyle through nutritious eating and creating a welcoming space for the community.

Candace and Austin Kovar, the wife-and-husband duo behind Toastique Ann Arbor, are thrilled to open their new location and serve the community. "We are excited to bring Toastique to Ann Arbor and

look forward to becoming a part of this vibrant community," says Candace. "Our menu is designed to offer something for everyone, whether you're looking for a quick breakfast, a nutritious snack or a refreshing juice."

*Location: 200 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. To place an order or for more information, call 734-585-5965 or visit [Toastique.com/ann-arbor](http://Toastique.com/ann-arbor).*

## Stone and Spoon Hosts Inaugural Ypsi Vegan Fest

Stone and Spoon presents the inaugural Ypsi Vegan Fest from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., on August 10. This vibrant event celebrates the plant-based lifestyle, promoting compassion, sustainability and delectable culinary creations.

Ypsi Vegan Fest, the first of its kind in Ypsilanti, marks a significant milestone for the community. The festival brings together diverse food trucks, vendors, makers and nonprofit organizations to showcase the best in vegan cuisine and lifestyle products.

Guests can indulge in a variety of delicious, plant-based foods, exploring offerings from local food vendors and makers dedicated to sustainable and ethical products. The festival encourages community engagement, providing an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and organizations passionate about a sustainable and compassionate way of life. Additionally, attendees can learn about and support nonprofit organizations advocating for veganism, animal rights and environmental sustainability.

Stone and Spoon is proud to present this inclusive and accessible event, designed to provide an enriching experience for all attendees. The organizers express their excitement in bringing the Ypsi Vegan Fest to the community, celebrating the vibrant and diverse vegan lifestyle and sharing it with Ypsilanti and beyond.

*Location: 110 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. For more information, call 123-456-7890 or visit [StoneAndSpoon.com](http://StoneAndSpoon.com).*



## Celebrate Creativity at Neutral Zone's Summer Mini Showcase

Neutral Zone, a transformative, youth-driven community in Ann Arbor, welcomes youth to engage in a summer of creativity, connection and empowerment. Each week from Monday to Wednesday, the center offers a daily drop-in space, healthy snacks and three activity options featuring local artists. Thursdays bring the entire community together with engaging activities. The Neutral Zone encourages new youth to join at any time, welcoming all levels of experience.

The upcoming Week 6, running from August 5 to 8, is the Summer Finale Week, promising a series of exciting activities. This

week features Tie Dye sessions, allowing participants to bring vibrant colors to shirts, socks and more. Karaoke sessions invite youth to sing their hearts out in celebration of the last week of summer. Additionally, table tennis will be available for those looking to flex their ping pong skills, learn proper playing etiquette or simply have some fun.



NZ teens, staff and teen board members tennis will be available for those looking to flex their ping pong skills, learn proper playing etiquette or simply have some fun.

From 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., on August 8, the Summer Mini Showcase and BBQ will take place. Teens can enjoy a BBQ, followed by a Mini Showcase for family and friends from 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. This event offers an opportunity to display the talents and skills honed over the summer, whether learned at Neutral Zone or elsewhere. The showcase celebrates the creative achievements of the youth, fostering a sense of pride and community.

*Location: 310 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-214-9995 or visit [Neutral-Zone.org](http://Neutral-Zone.org).*

## Ann Arbor's Common Cycle Hosts Weekly Bike Repair Sessions

Common Cycle invites the Ann Arbor community to its volunteer-run, community workspace, open to the public every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Located just outside downtown Ann Arbor, this welcoming space offers residents the opportunity to learn about bike repair, share tools and build a sense of community.

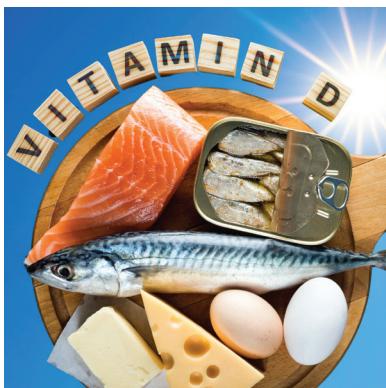


Common Cycle, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to empowering individuals to maintain their bicycles safely. The workspace provides access to community tools and knowledgeable volunteers ready to assist with maintenance issues or personal projects. The organization believes that everyone can learn to care for their bike, ensuring safety and promoting sustainable transportation.

Visitors to the workshop can benefit from the expertise of experienced mechanics as well as enthusiastic newcomers, creating a collaborative environment where knowledge and skills are shared freely. This initiative is part of Common Cycle's broader mission to support sustainable transportation and foster a strong community spirit.

Additionally, Common Cycle's distribution and partnership program works to provide free bicycles to those in need within the Ann Arbor area, further promoting accessibility and sustainability.

*Location: 416 W. Huron St., Ste. 11, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-619-0907 or visit [CommonCycle.org](http://CommonCycle.org).*



## Lifestyle, Nutrition and Bone Density

According to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, bones that contain more minerals are denser, stronger and less likely to break. With age or certain medical conditions, bones can become less dense, and osteoporosis can develop,

causing them to become weak and brittle.

A study published in the journal *Nutrients* evaluated the role of lifestyle and nutrition on women's bone mineral density. The study included a cross-section of more than 850 healthy premenopausal Saudi women divided into two age groups: 20-to-30-year-olds and 30-to-40-year-olds. Participants had their bone mineral density measured, provided a blood sample and self-reported sociodemographic, medical history, lifestyle, diet and physical activity information. The results showed that adequate vitamin D levels, physical activity and proper nutrition positively influence bone mineral density values, which can impact bone health later in life.



## Asbestos in Cosmetics

Talc is used in many forms of makeup, including bronzer, blush, eyeshadow, foundation, mascara, lipstick and dry shampoo, because it absorbs moisture and prevents caking. But when it is mined, talc may be contaminated by naturally

occurring asbestos, which is not evenly distributed, making testing for it difficult.

British women have sued leading cosmetic companies in U.S. courts, claiming they contracted mesothelioma, an incurable cancer of the lining of the lung, heart or stomach, through their use of cosmetic products. Unless related to employment, it is difficult to bring legal action for mesothelioma in the UK, and many of the large cosmetic companies are based in America. These women are seeking compensation and to raise awareness of the risks.

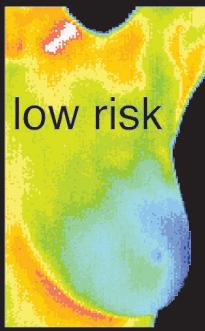
Johnson and Johnson (J&J) faces nearly 54,000 lawsuits related to claims that talc in baby powder caused ovarian cancer. A Reuters investigation found that J&J executives knew for decades that talc can contain asbestos.



## Harmful Chemicals in Decaffeinated Coffee

Environmental activist groups filed petitions with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to remove two chemicals from their safe list that are used in the production of decaffeinated coffee. Trichloroethylene and methylene chloride

were found to cause cancer decades ago by the National Cancer Institute. Notably, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently banned the use of methylene chloride for industrial use due to its risk of causing cancer and other serious health conditions. Safer methods for decaffeinating coffee exist, and some brands, like Peet's Coffee, have made the switch. To find out how a brand of coffee is decaffeinated, consumers can visit *CheckYourDecaf.org* or contact the producer.



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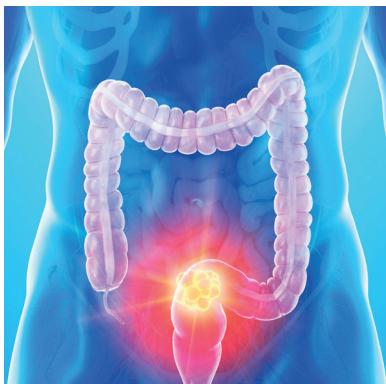


## Natural Remedy for Radiation-Induced Dermatitis

Dermatitis affects 95 percent of patients undergoing radiation therapy. According to a review published in *Drugs in Context*, the symptoms of radiation-induced dermatitis include pain, ulceration, swelling, itching, burning and physical and psychological discomfort.

In some cases, opportunistic infections may also arise. While initial treatments involve moisturizers, dressings and antihistamines, more severe cases are treated with topical corticosteroids and antibiotics.

Seventy breast cancer patients undergoing radiation treatment participated in a 2024 randomized, double-blind study published in *Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications* to test the effectiveness of Alantel, a topical body cream that contains concentrated levels of aloe vera, chamomile and thyme. Half the group applied Alantel during the four-week trial, and the control group applied a standard moisturizing emollient cream that contained beeswax. The Alantel group had significantly lower incidence of lesions and a significantly lower duration of dermatitis than the control group.



## Western Diet and Colorectal Cancer

Researchers from Ohio State University (OSU) have provided another reason to choose a more natural, plant-based diet: lowering the risk of colorectal cancer. Twenty percent of colorectal patients are under age 55, and the rate is increasing, according to the American Cancer Society.

OSU scientists believe that the Western diet upsets the balance of gut bacteria, which, in turn, causes inflammation and accelerated cell aging, making individuals more susceptible to cancer. The researchers found that colorectal cancer patients were biologically 15 years older than their chronological age.

A study in the journal *Nutrients* characterized a Western diet as "high intakes of pre-packaged foods, refined grains, red meat, processed meat, high-sugar drinks, candy, sweets, fried foods, conventionally raised animal products, high-fat dairy products and high-fructose products."

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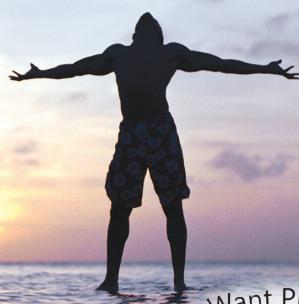
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# Driven By a Need to Create:

## Joe Calkins Turns Landfill into a Creative Oasis at Turtlebay Iron & Wood Works

**O**n a sprawling 17-acre plot once used as a landfill in White Cloud, Michigan, Joe Calkins has found inspiration among the discarded remnants of the past. The land, with its small lake surrounded by a sanctuary for Blue Herons, water snakes, turtles and songbirds, now serves as the creative hub for Turtlebay Iron & Wood Works. Each step across this land reveals the crunch of glass beneath one's feet, a stark reminder of the transformation underway.

Calkins spends every spring meticulously cleaning the property, unearthing broken glass and rusted metal scraps, which he then categorizes into recycling bins or his "inspiration pile." These discarded items are given new life as unique pieces of art. Crows crafted from old metal banding, fish from rusted cookie sheets, and birds from long-forgotten spoons and knives adorn the studio, each piece telling a story of renewal.

"When I'm outside cleaning up the trash on the property, ideas and inspiration just pour in. I see an old rusty lamp base and I just know it's supposed to be a sunflower," Calkins says. His ability to see beauty in the overlooked and the discarded has turned Turtlebay Iron & Wood Works into a beacon of creativity and sustainability.

Beyond upcycled art, Calkins has an eye for heirloom and vintage furniture. "It is really difficult to find a quality piece of furniture in a store nowadays, furniture just isn't made like it used to be," he remarks. His curated collection includes solid wood pieces, often antique or vintage, sourced from estate sales and private collections. Each item is hand-selected for its uniqueness and craftsmanship, ensuring that customers receive only the best.

Turtlebay Studio operates by appointment, offering visitors a chance to view or purchase Calkins' art and furniture. Many of his pieces are also available online through his Etsy and Chairish shops. This blend of in-person and digital presence allows a broader audience to experience the magic of Turtlebay Iron & Wood Works.

Calkins' dedication to his craft and his commitment to sustainability resonate with those who visit his studio. The transformation of a landfill into a vibrant creative space is a testament to his vision and

hard work. "Art is an essential part of the quality of life," he emphasizes, underscoring his belief that creativity can flourish even in the most unlikely places.

*Location: 541 E. Grand River Ave., Ste. 5, East Lansing. For more information, call 517-203-1113 or visit [TurtleBayArt.com](http://TurtleBayArt.com).*

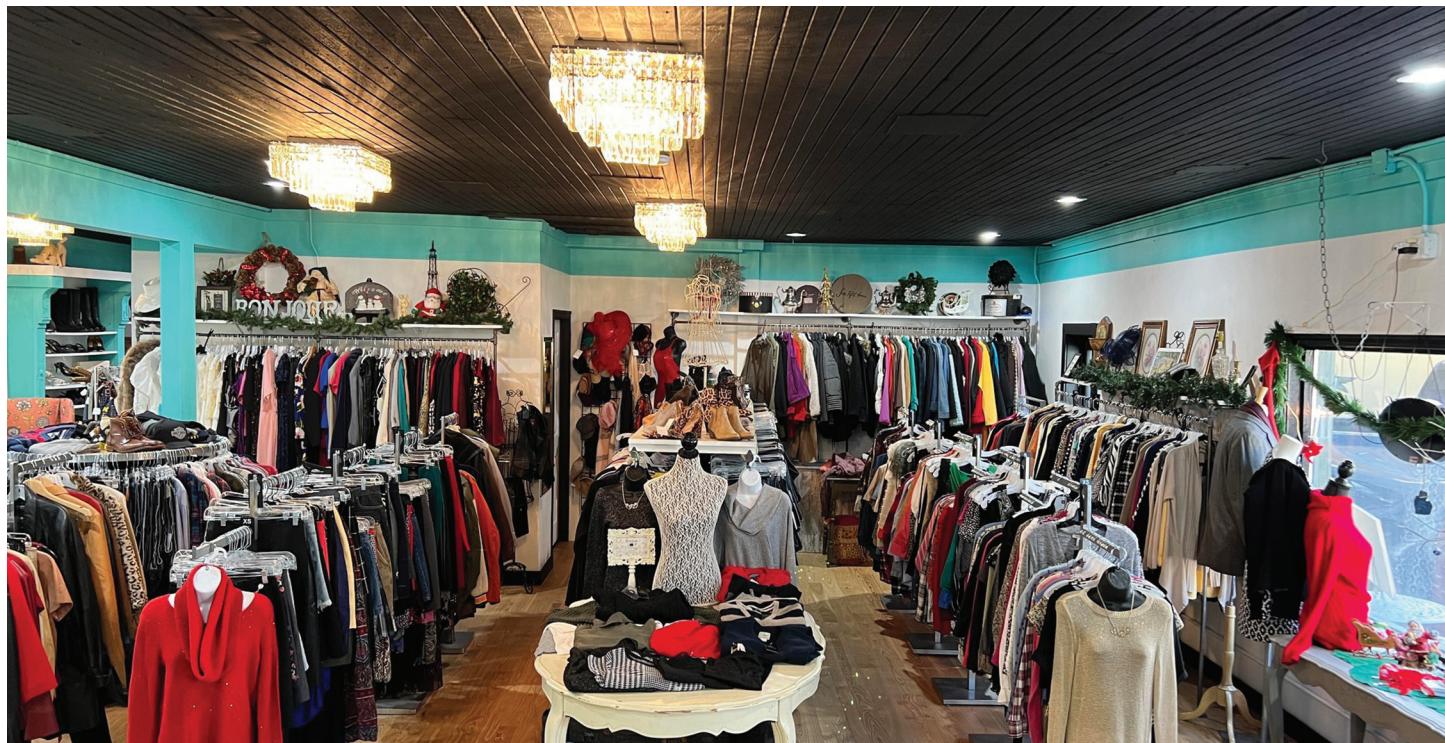


*Joe Calkins and his scrap Iron Eagle*



# Sustainable Style:

Discover Cass and Co. Upscale Thrift



**N**estled in the heart of the community, Cass and Co. Upscale Thrift is more than just an upscale thrift and gift shop—it represents a movement towards a more sustainable and stylish future. This vibrant store caters to everyone, offering a wide array of high-quality items at affordable prices. From clothes, purses, shoes and jewelry to home decor, handmade items and much more, Cass and Co. ensures that every family member finds something special.

## A Shopping Experience with Intention

Entering Cass and Co., customers are greeted by a curated selection of beautiful items and a sense of purpose. Thrifting here goes beyond discovering amazing deals on favorite brands; it's about rejecting throwaway fashion culture and embracing sustainability. The

ethos of Cass and Co. is simple yet powerful: Reuse, Rely, Repurpose. Every purchase contributes to a more eco-friendly world, proving that the clothes worn can indeed create change.

## Back-to-School Special and Entire Store Summer Sale

As the back-to-school season approaches, Cass and Co. is excited to offer a special promotion to help families prepare. From now until the end of August, customers can enjoy a 20 percent discount on all clothing and accessories. This is the perfect opportunity to update wardrobes with stylish, high-quality items without breaking the bank. By choosing thrifited items, families are also teaching the next generation the importance of sustainable living.

Additionally, Cass and Co. is celebrating

the summer season with a storewide sale. Everyone can enjoy incredible savings on a wide variety of items. Whether shoppers are looking to refresh their wardrobe, find unique decor for their home or pick up handmade gifts, this summer sale has something for everyone. Shoppers are encouraged not to miss out on the chance to shop sustainably while scoring fantastic deals.

Cass and Co. welcomes everyone to explore and be inspired, whether they are searching for a unique gift, a fashion-forward outfit or simply a pleasant shopping experience with a purpose. Join Cass and Co. in making a difference, one stylish find at a time.

*Location: 7980 Ann Arbor St., Dexter. For more information, call 734-543-5431 or visit [CassAndCoThrift.com](http://CassAndCoThrift.com). See ad on back cover.*



# The Power of Community

## Finding a Path to Meaningful Connection

by Thais Harris, BCHN



**D**espite society's increasing emphasis on individualism, the concept of community remains a powerful force for personal and collective well-being. Loneliness is detrimental to both mental and physical health and comparable to smoking or obesity in terms of risk factors. Among older adults, isolation is associated with an increased probability of dementia.

In his book *Project Unlonely: Healing Our Crisis of Disconnection*, Dr. Jeremy Noble discusses the public health and economic impacts of widespread seclusion, as well as the importance of building meaningful connections. He advocates making loneliness screening a routine part of health care and prescribing social activities such as museum visits, classes and nature walks for

patients. These measures have been effectively used in the United Kingdom.

There is a growing movement that encourages us to find our tribe—those that resonate with our own core values, interests and lifestyle. While historically associated with Indigenous groups, a “tribe” is defined as a social division consisting of families or

*Volunteering is a powerful way to engage in activities that align with our passions and values while also connecting with like-minded people and helping a cause or deserving group of individuals.*

communities linked by social, economic, religious or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect. The point is to surround ourselves with supportive individuals that uplift us and provide a sense of belonging.

### Multigenerational Communion

Family is, in a sense, our original tribe, serving a crucial role in our sense of belonging throughout life. Regardless of interpersonal dynamics, maintaining consistent connection with relatives can ease loneliness and improve longevity and other health outcomes. In the world's Blue Zones, where people live the longest and have a better overall quality of life, the happiest centenarians build their lives around their families, and multigenerational households are common.

To remain anchored in our heritage, it is essential to regularly share moments and activities with kin, enjoying family meals, holiday parties, game nights, walks around the neighborhood or even living room

hangouts. Simply spending time together allows us to share family stories, learn from each other and create traditions. Outside the family, there are many ways to find or create a tribe of cheerful acquaintances and deeply held friendships that form a safety net to shield us from drifting into isolation.

### Serving Others

Volunteering is a powerful way to engage in activities that align with our passions and values while also connecting with like-minded people and helping a cause or deserving group of individuals. One example is Volunteers in Medicine (VIM), founded in 2003, which brings together 70 medical professionals and approximately 100 community stakeholders that volunteer their time to provide free health care for the uninsured people of the Berkshires, in Massachusetts. While the practitioners treat patients—in-person and online—the others serve as interpreters, drivers and receptionists. The generosity of these individuals

addresses an important need in the community and keeps people out of hospitals.

"By engaging in VIM's mission, volunteers find purpose and meaning through the act of giving back, enhancing their own lives while improving others," shares VIM Executive Director Ilana Steinhauer. "The opportunity to serve the community not only fulfills a personal desire to help those in need, but also fosters a deep sense of connection and community among volunteers. This camaraderie and shared mission enrich the volunteers' lives, creating a ripple effect of positivity that strengthens the entire community fabric, making it a cornerstone of community and personal development."

Another example is nonprofit Citizen University, which equips Americans to be cultural catalysts. Their Local Civic Collaboratory aims to shift the paradigm of success from individual achievement to shared triumph. Through collaborative gatherings, participants are empowered to address local issues,

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launch educational initiatives and spark artistic endeavors while relishing in deep conversations, forging meaningful bonds and launching networks of unified action.

## Making Deep Connections

Coming together around shared beliefs or devotional practices can be another avenue to step away from seclusion and into a loving fraternity. Some people with shared values and goals choose to live with each other in what is known as intentional communities, many of which emphasize sustainability, cooperation and mutual support. The Foundation for Intentional Community offers an online directory to find the right living situation based on multiple criteria, including geographical location, community type, dietary preferences, educational styles, religious or spiritual beliefs and renewable energy sources.

## The Kindness of Strangers

When we are out and about, we encounter people we don't know—strangers in supermarket aisles, bank lines or walking their dogs in the local park. Instead of passing by without acknowledging them, we have the choice to say hello or exchange pleasantries. On his podcast "Hidden Brain," Shankar Vedantam explores how these tiny encounters can impact our lives. Smiling at people in the street, expressing gratitude for small acts of kindness or complimenting someone's style elevates both parties. Studies by Amit Kumar, assistant professor of marketing and psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, and Nicholas Epley, professor of behavioral science at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, highlight the beneficial, long-term impact of small acts of kindness and positive interactions on recipients and givers.

## Bonding Online and In Person

If friendships were lost during the pandemic, rebuilding a tribe will require intentionality and creativity. Reaching out with purpose to create community might just be what saves us and the planet. When we feel a sense of belonging, we can collaborate for

the common good and boost our ability to protect nature, innovate and find solutions for the world's problems. How we network is limited only by our imagination: Take classes at the local library, community college or arts organization; find a fun activity on *MeetUp.com*; or form a group to make new friends that share a common interest.

While online tribes can offer accessibility and a broader reach, thus facilitating connections with people from different geographies and backgrounds, face-to-face interactions are essential to our well-being. Holistic psychologist Victoria Kar shares, "Never in history has humanity been more disconnected from each other than now. The predominance of urban lifestyles creates barriers for deep social connections, and technology creates a false sense of belonging—where we can reach someone on the other side of the world on a screen—yet have no one to hold next to us."

In-person communities provide a more heartfelt sense of fellowship. When we are present, we emit energetic fields, and the heart radiates perhaps the most powerful energy. Studies conducted by the HeartMath Institute have shown that the heart's magnetic field can be detected by other individuals up to five feet away, igniting our sense of belonging in a way that is not possible online.

In his recent advisory report, "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation," U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Hhallegere Murthy notes that, across age groups, people are spending less time with each other in person than two decades ago, and this is most pronounced among young people aged 15 to 24 that are engaging in 70 percent fewer interactions with friends. Murthy points out, "The impact of this lack of social connection can be felt in our schools, workplaces and organizations, where performance, productivity and engagement are diminished."

The report outlines six recommendations to enhance social connection, including:

- Urging for greater social infrastructure at parks, libraries and public programs
- Enacting pro-connection public policies at every level of government such as access to public transport and paid family leave
- Mobilizing the health sector to address needs stemming from isolation
- Reforming digital environments
- Investing in research to deepen our understanding of social isolation
- Cultivating a culture of connection

In his book *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*, Murthy identifies three types of connections that play a crucial role in our lives: intimate (close friends and family), relational (friends and acquaintances) and collective (communities). Factors such as work culture, social media and urbanization can hinder meaningful connections, contributing to a growing sense of isolation.

As a solution, he emphasizes the importance of small, consistent actions such as active listening, expressing gratitude and engaging with community. True connection is a source of healing. The Surgeon General urges, "Answer that phone call from a friend. Make time to share a meal. Listen without the distraction of your phone. Perform an act of service. Express yourself authentically."

Finding a tribe can significantly impact our health and happiness, providing support, joy and inclusion. The connections we choose to nurture can enrich our lives in profound ways, ensuring we thrive in body, mind and spirit.

*Thais Harris is a board-certified holistic nutritionist, bestselling author and international speaker. Connect at NourishTogether.com.*



# Gathering Around the Friendship Fire

by Marlaina Donato



Lelde Feldmane-Zajarska/Shutterstock

depend upon winged creatures for pollination, and lichens are often composed of three organisms living together harmoniously.

As we go through the workday, drive the kids to practice and scramble to get dinner on the table, it is easy to forget that we, too, are part of the natural order. Fostering life-nourishing connections helps us to cope and thrive, while prioritizing openness can become much-needed soul medicine.

Summer days are often treasured for the memories we make with those we love, yet to-do lists loom over our heads as August winds down. This year, let's take the spirit of summer into the cooler months and vow to spend quality time with loved ones, mend the broken threads in our relationships and enjoy each other's company in the present moment. We can choose to appreciate everyone—from the supermarket cashier to the family dentist—and see their worthy contributions interwoven in our own lives. In doing so, we might remember our own invaluable roles in the fabric of life.

To rekindle and build community, join a local group or class to share a passion; chitchat with someone while standing in line at the grocery store; or invite a neighbor to spend quality time together. Take every opportunity to make a connection.

In our modern Western world, we sit amid the ruins of what community used to be. Our tapestry of human bonds is becoming threadbare beneath the weight of overly scheduled lives, screen distraction and social divisions. Despite having constant contact with others on our phones, newsfeeds and online conference rooms, we may sometimes feel like lone travelers across a tundra of isolation.

In nature, symbiotic relationships between fungi and trees, flowers and insects, and certain species of animals are the foundation of life. As much as 70 percent of forest flora

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*Marlaina Donato is an author, painter and composer. Connect at BluefireStudio.art.*

# Ilarion Merculieff

on The Wisdom of the Elders

by Sandra Yeyati

**I**larion Merculieff is a passionate advocate for Indigenous rights and the harmonious relationship with Mother Earth. For decades, he has served his people—the Unangan (Aleuts) of the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea—and other Indigenous peoples in a number of capacities. He was city manager of Saint Paul Island, commissioner of the Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development and chairman of the board of The Aleut Corporation.

Merculieff has chaired global climate change summits, led Indigenous gatherings for the healing of Mother Earth, participated in sacred ceremonies around the world, given keynote addresses at government conferences and lectured about traditional ways of knowing at universities. His many articles and books include *Wisdom Keeper: One Man's Journey to Honor the Untold History of the Unangan People*.

Today, Merculieff is president and founder of the Global Center for Indigenous Leadership & Lifeways, and as the co-founder of Wisdom Weavers of the World, he collaborates with Indigenous Elders to propagate their vital messages.

## **Could you describe your Unangan upbringing on St. Paul Island?**

I come from a remarkable people. Unangan means “people by the sea”. We’ve lived in the Bering Sea for over 10,000 years, and we’re still there. My generation was the last to have a fully intact traditional upbringing. The adults’ job was to create the space for a child to learn, not to tell them what to learn, how to learn or to define anything.

At age 5, I had a traditional mentor, my Aachaa, who took me under his wing until age 13. He taught me much of what I know about being a man, reverence for life, hunting and fishing, and the ethics and values of being Unangan, and yet he may have said no more than 200 words to me that whole time. I learned by watching and listening.

## **Why is it important to be present in the moment and in the heart?**

Our people understand that the heart never guides us wrong. It is a place of love, compassion, patience and understanding. When you’re out of the mind and in the heart, present in the moment, that’s when you commune with all that is, or as we call it, the Maker. The heart receives things and communicates them to the mind. Traditionally, all people around the world used to have the heart tell the mind what to do. Today, the mind tells the heart what to do, which is a masculine imbalance, because it’s top-down, it’s control, it’s fear. Today, we have shut off the communication vehicle for receiving information.

## **Can you explain the Hopi saying: “Seek not to fight evil, let goodness take its place”?**

We are energy beings. When we focus our energy on stopping wars, political corruption or the violation of women, we are taking



Courtesy of Ilarion Merculieff

our mental, physical and spiritual energy and putting it into those things, which increases the power of the negative things that we're trying to stop. Instead, the Hopi say, just focus on the world you wish to see without reaction to anything else, and then we will see real change happen. When we are in alignment and in harmony with the vibrational field of Mother Earth, then we will have real impact. Even the smallest thing that you do that is positive, that is not in reaction against something, adds to this effort.

### ***How should we approach the problem of climate change?***

People are depending upon governments and science and technology to figure out a way out of global climate change, but the Elders know that this is not going to be the answer. What we understand is that we must let go of this thing that everybody is attached to, which is the mind. What we call state-of-the-art technologies is nothing but the old regurgitated as new. For example, when the U.S.

*"Focus on the world you wish to see without reaction to anything else, and then we will see real change happen."*

committed to hybrid fuel, that was considered good environmentally, but the Elders understood that this was going to have repercussions. Many of the world's farmers stopped raising food crops to raise fuel crops like corn, and that led to food shortages, starvation and increased food prices around the world.

Depending on logic and rationality to guide us is the wrong place to look. The answers are in our hearts. When we access that place, when we receive that information, we will have a gift to give to the world. Each and every person is needed now. You cannot do anything about climate change until you receive your gift. It's challenging because, accepting that as a paradigm, you have to do things that your heart is telling you to do, and it might be something that people think is crazy, like going around dancing in a circle or leaving a good job. You might be worried about where you're going to get your food the next day.

When you stop worrying and just trust by being present in the moment and in the heart, you will contribute to the survival of the human race. Each person that does that changes the vibration that the world now is surrounded by, which is in a masculine imbalance. We need to change our consciousness now.

Sandra Yeyati is national editor of Natural Awakenings.

To read a longer version of this conversation, scan QR Code.



The advertisement features a purple background with a central graphic of a human silhouette with glowing energy fields. Below the graphic, the text "Miraculous Energies" is written in large, serif capital letters, with "Energy Lounge" in smaller letters underneath. A banner below reads "A Private Membership Association". The main title "eESYSTEM" is in large, bold, white letters, with "24 Unit EE System" in smaller white letters below it. Two photographs are shown: one showing a row of black reclining chairs in a room, and another showing a single black reclining chair from a different angle. To the right of the text "We Now Have A 24 Unit EE System In Williamston!", there is descriptive text about the Energy Enhancement System (Ees) and its benefits. At the bottom, there is contact information: "Appointment Only", a phone number "517.599.4949", a website "eesystemmichigan.com", and social media links for Facebook and Instagram.

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# In Search of the Healthiest Diet

Sustenance and Habits Inspired by Blue Zones

by Maya Whitman



The average life expectancy is 77.5 years in the United States, but residents of the Seventh-Day Adventist city, Loma Linda, California, are outliving the rest of the country by 10 years. Like other regions of the world classified as Blue Zones, Loma Linda's soil and water aren't sprinkled with magic, but daily lifestyle and dietary habits might be key contributing factors.

Coined by *National Geographic* explorer and researcher Dan Buettner, the term "Blue Zones" is bestowed upon intriguing corners of the world where people reach their ninth decade and beyond without suffering from chronic illness and disease. While no definitive formula for longevity exists in Loma Linda or any of the other four Blue Zones—Nuoro Province, Sardinia, Italy; Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica; Okinawa, Japan; and Ikaria, Greece—commonalities include staying physically active, eating unprocessed food and enjoying a vibrant social network.

"By prioritizing physical activity, encouraging plant-based diets and creating spaces that promote social interactions, communities can reduce the incidence of chronic diseases and improve overall well-being," says Buettner, author of *The Blue Zones Kitchen*, who found his life's work traveling the world in search of centenarian secrets.

## Delicious Simplicity

In 2023, *JAMA Internal Medicine* published the findings of a long-term study involving more than 75,000 women and 44,000 men over 36 years, which determined that adherence to one of four plant-based and Mediterranean dietary patterns can lower the risk of premature death. All of the dietary guidelines in this study included whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes. Growing evidence suggests that nutrient-dense, unprocessed meals play a major role in reducing inflammation and oxidative stress, which can contribute to cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes.

"Diets in Blue Zones are predominantly plant-based, with a heavy emphasis on vegetables, fruits, legumes and whole grains. They also eat a variety of beans, which are a staple in their diets and an excellent source of protein and fiber," Buettner points out, adding that

moderate portion sizes, unhurried mealtime and leaving the table when 80 percent full are also highlights of the Blue Zone lifestyle.

Anna Freedman, a natural-food chef, educator and founder of Wholefood Harmony, in London, England, specializes in a health-supporting macrobiotic approach based on ancient Japanese philosophy and developed in the 1920s by George Ohsawa. She says, "Whole foods are essential to health and longevity. Plants capture the sun's energy, so consuming vegetables, fruits, legumes and grains bestows both nutrition and vibrancy upon the body. These foods are alkalizing and directly nourish the cells, restoring the blood quality and supporting health and longevity."

Macrobiotic favorites like lentils, chickpeas, whole grains and dark, leafy greens echo Blue Zone dietary models and are believed to promote overall systemic balance. The macrobiotic approach, adds Freedman, "can be adjusted to focus on improving a certain health condition or adapted to meet climate, phase of life or another factor." In her work with clients, she encourages the consumption of a wide range of plant ingredients and cooking styles, and even incorporates certain animal proteins, to accommodate client preferences.

Diets that seek to promote a longer, healthier life usually include powerhouse ingredients such as naturally fermented sauerkraut and kimchi, legumes like lentils and split peas, and whole grains, especially barley, millet and oats.

## Social Sustenance

In our modern world, feelings of isolation are reaching epidemic proportions, and in the medical community, loneliness is now seen as a risk factor for mortality that is equal to the effects of obesity, smoking or a sedentary lifestyle. Through Blue Zone research, it is understood that emotional nourishment is vital to good health. According to Buettner, "In Blue Zones, people often engage in regular social interactions, whether it's through communal meals, faith-based gatherings or simply spending time with neighbors and family." A table of delicious food surrounded by loved ones is an inspiring way to eat and age gracefully.

For Gladys McGarey, M.D., cofounder of the American Holistic Medical Association, who is still practicing medicine at 103 years of age, our thoughts are also a form of nourishment. "What we feed our minds grows and lives, and we become it," says the author of the bestseller *The Well-Lived Life*. "It has to do with love, the whole process of life. Love must be shared to flow, and life is the same. We must not only create community, but live it."

Freedman sums it up saying, "Eating and togetherness is a key feature of humanity, which is alarmingly in sharp decline. Food was always meant to be enjoyed together, and doing so serves up much more than simply nutrition."

*Maya Whitman is a frequent writer for Natural Awakenings magazine.*

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### Bean and Squash Tortillas With Papaya Salsa

This recipe calls for the use of nixtamal corn tortillas, a staple in Mexican cooking. The masa is made by cooking and soaking dried corn kernels with calcium hydroxide or another alkali, which significantly increases its nutritional benefits. The tortillas can be made at home from scratch or purchased ready-made. Look for products made with nixtamalized corn masa.

#### YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

1 small ripe papaya, peeled, halved, seeded and chopped (about 1 cup)  
 1 small red bell pepper, stemmed, cored and diced (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh cilantro leaves, finely chopped  
 3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
 2 Tbsp fresh lime juice  
 1½ cups canned black or pinto beans, drained and rinsed  
 1 medium yellow squash, chopped (about 4 oz)  
 1 cup corn kernels cut from the ear or frozen kernels, thawed  
 2 medium carrots, peeled and shredded through the large holes of a box grater  
 1 tsp ground cumin  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp ground dried cayenne (or less, to taste)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt  
 6 nixtamal corn tortillas

Stir the papaya, bell pepper, cilantro, lime juice and 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a small bowl. Cover this salsa and set aside at room temperature for up to 4 hours.

Warm 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet set over medium-high heat. Add the beans, squash, corn, carrots, cumin, cayenne and salt. Cook, stirring often, until the squash is tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the papaya salsa and set aside off the heat.

Set the oven rack 4 to 6 inches from the broiler element; heat the broiler for a few minutes. Lay the tortillas on a large, lipped baking sheet and brush them with the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil. Broil until warmed and lightly toasted, about 30 seconds. Transfer the tortillas to serving plates and top each with a sixth of the bean mixture to serve.

*Recipe courtesy of Dan Buettner.*



Whitestorm from Getty Images/CanvaPro



## Toasted Spiced Chickpeas (Sardinia Side Dish)

**YIELD: 1½ CUPS**

- 1 15-oz can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp garlic salt
- ½ tsp chili powder
- ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 350° F.

Toss the chickpeas, oil, cumin, garlic salt, chili powder and black pepper in a large bowl until well coated and uniform. Pour the mixture onto a large, lipped baking sheet and spread into one layer. Bake 45 to 60 minutes until browned and crisp, stirring occasionally.

Set the baking sheet on a wire rack and cool for 10 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the chickpeas to a serving bowl. Serve warm or at room temperature with plenty of napkins.

*Recipe courtesy of Dan Buettner.*



aprilante from Getty Images/CanvaPro

## Immune-Boosting Soup With Miso and Ginger Scent

This macrobiotic soup combines all the healing and digestive benefits of miso and ginger. Noodles, fish and a variation of vegetables can be added, too.

**YIELD: 4 SERVINGS**

- Dash sesame oil*
- 1 leek, finely sliced*
- 1 carrot, finely diced*
- 1 zucchini or summer squash, finely diced*
- 3-inch portion of wakame sea vegetable, rinsed and cut into small strips*
- 3 cups boiling water*
- Spring onions, finely cut for garnish*
- 4 tsp brown rice miso paste*
- 1 inch ginger root, juiced*

Heat the sesame oil and sauté the leek for one minute. Add the other vegetables and wakame. To make a broth, add water to cover the ingredients, bring to a boil then simmer for 4 minutes.

Remove one ladle of broth and place in a bowl. Add the miso to this broth, stirring to dissolve and incorporate the paste into the broth, and then pour it back into the original pot of cooked vegetables. Add ginger juice and simmer for another minute or so. Garnish with spring onion.

*Recipe courtesy of Anna Freedman.*



# The Power of Healing Circles

Resilience and Enjoyment in Nurturing Company

by Maya Whitman

Throughout history, cultures around the globe have used the circle to represent wholeness, vital energy and community. When humans of like hearts gather in a circle, this timeless geometric symbol becomes embodied, lessening the space between individuals. In today's challenging times, healing circles echo ancient traditions by offering support from the deep well of human bonds. People from all walks of life are coming together to tap into their own healing potential by picking up a hand

drum, sharing the cancer treatment journey, dancing to tribal beats or expressing the deeper self with colorful paints.

Circles with inspired focus can help us navigate the rough waters of addiction, grief, illness and transitions by breaking down the protective walls we so often build in the name of survival. "We humans are a social species, and whether you are extroverted or introverted, the experience of belonging amongst others brings an impactful sense

of purpose," says Natalie Lain, executive director at Amethyst Retreat Center, in Duncannon, Pennsylvania. She relates that seeking communal bonds in gatherings like ecstatic dance events isn't about covering up hardship with false positives, but rather finding grace by "cultivating a foundation of inner strength and ease."

## Drumming Through Tough Times

Inspired by diverse cultural traditions, drum circles are offered at medical centers, hospitals and nursing homes for people with cancer, Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders, brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, dementia and viral-based illnesses, including AIDS. In a 2001 study at an outpatient medical facility in Pennsylvania, researchers found that group drumming that followed a music-therapy protocol boosted the body's natural killer cell activity and lowered the stress response among participants. Japanese research published in 2020 in *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience* shows that drumming communication programs help older people with dementia experience improved cognitive function and body composition.

Family members and caregivers can find much-needed relief by releasing challenging emotions through rhythmic drumming. "It's been very rewarding hosting drum circles with those navigating dementia and Alzheimer's disease," says Laura Cerrano, a reiki practitioner and healing drum circle facilitator in New York City and Long Island. "We've seen improved social interactions, joy, acknowledgment, feeling more present and restoring dignity."

## A Place To Be Ourselves

Some healing circles use the arts for self-expression and restorative benefits. In such settings, it is not necessary to aim for excellence or have any special talents; simply being present in the moment will suffice. Whether it's a free-form dance gathering or painting session, the main objective is being



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Jozef Klopak/Sutterstock

in our skin, and this, Cerrano notes, initiates “a greater capacity for heart-to-heart connections and healing.”

Lain concurs, saying, “Creative healing circles are all about learning how to accept ourselves as we are and remembering to nurture our inner child. We open up our hearts in these circles and let ourselves experience the

joy of pure expression, shedding layers of self-criticism and competitiveness.”

Expanding our capacity to love is a running thread through cacao ceremonies—gatherings that incorporate the consumption of unadulterated chocolate in its purest form, often prepared as a warm, frothy beverage. In the ancient Americas, cacao was used

both ceremonially and medicinally. Modern cacao circles are highly diverse and go beyond religious structure. Often interwoven with music, dance, prayer or meditation, these gatherings inspire reflection and self-exploration.

Online circles can also provide deep emotional sustenance, especially for those unable to attend local events. Cerrano, who has been hosting reiki circles since 2014, saw a need to expand virtually when the world came to a halt in 2020. “The pandemic inspired me to provide weekly virtual reiki circles because people needed a place to gather, feel safe and be heard.”

Whether online or in the neighborhood, healing circles offer something for everyone, and starting up a circle can be just as rewarding. “One of the most important things as a host of mindfulness-focused events is to embody the idea that we are all each other’s teachers,” advises Lain. “It’s important to create an inviting, safe space within your group where people can feel at ease and let their guard down.”

*Maya Whitman is a frequent writer for Natural Awakenings.*



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– 6:30-8pm. Mindful hiking in the late summer prairie. Northfield Woods & Arbor Woods Preserves, 150 E Northfield Church Rd, Whitmore Lake. Register: Washtenaw.org.

### FRIDAY, AUGUST 2

**Sound Bath Meditation** – 7-8:30pm. Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation. During the sound bath, Rob will play singing bowls, gongs, and more with the intention of washing you with the sounds that bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and ease tension. \$40. 7 Notes Natural Health, 3830 Packard Rd, Ste 120, Ann Arbor. Required registration: 248-962-5475 or 7NotesNaturalHealth.as.me.

**New Moon Night Hike** – 8-9:30pm. Enjoy a night hike under the stars to celebrate the alignment of the moon and the sun. We will do some science experiments out on the trail and visit some of LSNC's nocturnal animals. \$5. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. Registration required: DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

### MONDAY, AUGUST 5

#### Neutral Zone's Summer Finale Week

– Aug 5-8. Features Tie Dye and Karaoke sessions, and Table Tennis. Aug 8: Summer Mini Showcase and BBQ. 310 E Washington St, Ann Arbor. 734-214-9995. Neutral-Zone.org.

### THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

**Introduction to Micro-Current Neuro-feedback** – 6-7pm. Learn about the healing powers of MCN for anxiety, depression, burnout, insomnia, chronic pain, ADHD, OCD, TBI, memory and much more. With Stacy Stephens. Free. Alchemy Holistic Collective, 105 E Middle St, Chelsea. 734-210-1922. NewMoonNeuro.com.

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

**Toastique Grand Opening** – 8am-7pm. The first 100 guests will receive \$50 in Toastique rewards dollars, redeemable on future visits with a minimum purchase of \$10. Menu includes gourmet toasts, smoothies, cold-pressed juices, coffees, and more, all made from high-quality ingredients. 200 E Washington St, Ann Arbor. 734-585-5965. Toastique.com/ann-arbor.

**Meet Your Parks: Prairie Parade** – 10-11:30am. Join Natural Area Preservation (NAP) and Ann Arbor District Library (AADL) for a nature walk at Ruthven Nature Area. Meet at the Gallup boat launch park-

ing lot, at the southeast corner of Huron Pkwy and Geddes Rd, Ann Arbor. aadl.org.

**Sound & Vibrational Therapies Double Certification** – 10am-5pm. Level 1: Practitioner of Sound Healing Certification. Learn the science and theory of the practice, as well as allow you to experience several varieties of Sound Bath, Sound Meditation, and Yoga Nidra. Level 2: Practitioner of Vibrational Therapy Certification. Learn how to use sound therapeutically in private sessions or with specialized groups. 7 Notes Natural Health, 3830 Packard Rd, Ste 120, Ann Arbor. Required registration: 248-962-5475 or 7NotesNaturalHealth.as.me.

**Ypsi Vegan Fest** – 11am-5pm. The festival brings together diverse food trucks, vendors, makers and non-profit organizations to showcase the best in vegan cuisine and lifestyle products. Presented by Stone and Spoon. 10 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti. 734-945-7976. StoneAndSpoon.com.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### SEPTEMBER 16-19

**Dr. Chi Fingernail and Tongue Analysis Clinics** – Monday, September 16, through Thursday, September 19. Chi is a world-renowned expert in the Eastern medical art of fingernail and tongue evaluation. He travels the globe teaching clinicians and evaluating patients with many medical conditions. All visits are by appointment only. Call to schedule your appointment. Wycoff Wellness Center, 1226 Michigan Ave, East Lansing. 517-333-7270.

**The RFD Boys** – 8pm. Legends of Michigan Bluegrass. \$16, \$15/students, seniors, Ark members. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

### SUNDAY, AUGUST 11

**Stewardship Workday:** Gallup Wet Prairie – 9am-12pm. Help pull invasive weeds. Tools and know-how provided. Free. Meet in the Gallup Park parking lot, just over the wooden bridge, Ann Arbor. Pre-registration required: Tinyurl.com/ymus7nmf.

### TUESDAY, AUGUST 13

**Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers Meeting** – 7-9pm. This month's featured speaker is Ken Warchol, who will delve into the theme of "Preparing Your Hives for Win-

ter." Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14

**Monthly Lunch Club, Recipe Swap & Produce Shopping** – 12-2pm. Meet at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market (at the picnic tables near Detroit St & N Fifth Ave) for lunch. Then swap recipes and shop for ingredients at the market. City of Ann Arbor Farmers Market, 410 N 4th Ave, Ann Arbor. VegMichigan.org.

**Demystifying Journaling:** Three Powerful Practices – 6:30-8:30pm. Learn how to use three different guided techniques and processes to transform your journaling practice and enrich your life experiences. \$33. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-358-0218. nmwunveiled.com/journal.

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 17

**Johnson Preserve Prairie Hike and BioBlitz** – 10am-12pm. Will begin with a short hike and discussion on the value of observations made using citizen science platforms before dispersing in the prairie for the BioBlitz, an intense period of biological surveying to record all the living species within a designated area. Lloyd & Mabel Johnson Preserve, 4595 Platt Rd, Ann Arbor. LegacyLandConservancy.org.

**Labyrinth Tour** – 10am-3pm. In the Ann Arbor area, there are a dozen or so public labyrinths within 25 miles. Each style, setting and material of labyrinth has its own feel and unique experience. With Certified Advanced Labyrinth Facilitator, Rob Meyer-Kukan. 7 Notes Natural Health, 3830 Packard Rd, Ste 120, Ann Arbor. Required registration: 248-962-5475 or 7NotesNaturalHealth.as.me.

**Sunflower Festival** – 10am-5pm. Enjoy sunflower picking, strolling through the fields to pick favorite blooms. Also includes a DIY Crafts & Bouquet Bar, Local Gifts and Artisan Market, food trucks and Kids & Toddler Play Area. \$5/person, free/under age 12. 475 N Fletcher Rd, Dexter. 517-250-1222. JacobsFreshFarm.com.

**Native Plant Sale** – Aug 17-18. 11am-4:30pm, Sat; 10am-4:30pm, Sun. A sale of native Michigan seedlings. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

### THURSDAY, AUGUST 22

**Iron Creek Workday** – 3-5pm. Help remove trash from the preserve in preparation for the public opening. 11703 Noggles Rd, Manchester. LegacyLandConservancy.org.

**Combating the Biodiversity Crisis with**

**Native Plants** – 7-8pm. With Sarah Gray & Coralie Palmer. Hosted by Wild Ones National. Virtual. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 23

**Stewardship Workday:** Kuebler Langford Nature Area – 9am-12pm. Tools and know-how provided. Free. Meet at the Beechwood entrance off of Sunset Rd, Ann Arbor. Pre-registration required: [Tinyurl.com/23rasdhw](http://tinyurl.com/23rasdhw).

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 24

**Iron Creek Workday** – 10am-12pm. Help remove trash from the preserve in preparation for the public opening. 11703 Noggles Rd, Manchester. LegacyLand Conservancy.org.

**Rain Garden Aquatic Planting Volunteer Day** – 10am-12pm. Help add native plants to a significant bioswale in Dolph Park. 375 Parklake Ave, Ann Arbor. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

**Dr. Chi Fingernail and Tongue Analysis FREE Seminar** – 6-8pm. Chi is a world-renowned expert in the Eastern medical art of fingernail and tongue evaluation. He travels the globe teaching clinicians and evaluating patients with many medical conditions. Please reserve your seat by contacting the office. Wycoff Wellness Center, 1226 Michigan Ave, East Lansing. 517-333-7270.

### TUESDAY, AUGUST 27

**Artist Spotlight:** Fantastic Cat – 8pm. "The supergroup you need to know," Rolling Stone. Free; please bring a non-perishable food donation for Food Gatherers. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

## WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28

**Open Stage** – 8pm. Take your music to the masses. Open Stage nights offer supportive audiences and a terrific space. Performers have 8 mins (or 2 songs) each to do their thing. \$3, \$2/members, seniors, students. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 29

**Couples Reconnect & Pizzaz** – 7-8:30pm. The 1st of a 2-part series helping couples invigorate their relationships through a casual group therapy discussion. \$150/couple. Mahabir Wellness, 1640 Haslett Rd, Ste 100, Haslett. RSVP: 517-325-9954.

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 30

**Fireside Fun** – 6:30-8:30pm. There's nothing quite as relaxing as sitting around a campfire, roasting marshmallows and swapping stories. Free. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

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## DAILY

**Ayurveda For Us** – Provides online consultations, where clients receive personalized guidance to address chronic health issues and reclaim their vitality. With a focus on diet, herbalism, mental and spiritual healing and lifestyle adjustments, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to wellness. To schedule a free 30-min discovery call: [Calendly.com/d4dc-gws-6fw/discovery-call](https://calendly.com/d4dc-gws-6fw/discovery-call). For more info & appt: [AyurvedaFor.us](http://AyurvedaFor.us).

**Herbs for the Southeast Michigan Garden** – Learn how to grow and use 20 culinary and medicinal herbs suited for the southeast Michigan garden. Will cover preservation techniques, basic medicine making and crafting herbal oils, poultices, infused honeys and vinegars plus more. Free. More info & register: [CastleRemedies.podia.com](http://CastleRemedies.podia.com).

**Introduction to Homeopathy Class** – Learn how to choose remedies and how to use them. Class contains nearly 4 hrs of pre-recorded videos. Downloadable resources. \$75. More info & register: [CastleRemedies.podia.com](http://CastleRemedies.podia.com).

**Holistic Health Consultation** – 9am-7pm. Online or phone consultation consultations last about 1 hr and are provided by Certified Xolar Vibronics Holistic Educator and Life Coach Ikaro Phoenix. Be introduced to various techniques, elements or holistic ways of viewing the situation which help the soul to be reeducated and empowered to deal with problems and eliminate them from their root. \$150. For appt: [LivingWisdomCoaching.earth](http://LivingWisdomCoaching.earth).

**Pets & Parents Reiki Session** – 9am-9pm. Sessions for wellness, critical care and end of life transition. Actively experience the use of reiki touch with your pet. Learn additional tips for helping your pet. Virtual 40-min appt. \$20. 231-590-0001. [TCDesoto@gmail.com](mailto:TCDesoto@gmail.com).

**The Best Affirmation for You** – 10am. Learn about the power of affirmations and how they can bring about positive events and circumstances. Call for a 10-15-min consultation with a licensed professional counselor to pick the best affirmation for you. Purchase an affirmation stone to enhance what you are affirming in your life by having a visible reminder. Free. 734-644-6943. [Harmony2c.com/affirmation-stones](http://Harmony2c.com/affirmation-stones).

**Tiny Lions Lounge & Adoption Center (TLC)** – 12-7pm, Wed-Sun. Offers feline-friendly activities with kittens and cats available to take home. 5245 Jackson Rd, Ste A1, 734-661-3575. [TinyLions.org](http://TinyLions.org).

**Naturally Purifying and Supercharging Your Body Podcast** – 7-7:45pm. Matthew Hazen is the owner of Human Consciousness Support, a company that produces a unique nutraceutical product called MasterPeace. Free. [buzzsprout.com/1206776/14236700](http://buzzsprout.com/1206776/14236700).

## WEEKLY

**Yoga with Crysterra Wellness** – Variety of classes Tues-Thurs. Cost varies. For schedule & details: [CrysterraWellness.com](http://CrysterraWellness.com).

**Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care** – Christy DeBurton will guide you on a journey of self-discovery to examine the obstacles that stand in the

way of you taking better care of yourself. 4-wk self-paced online course. \$79 (regular \$149). Yoga Room, 889 Honey Creek Dr, Ann Arbor. Info@ChristyDeBurton.com. [YogaRoomAnnArbor.com/online-courses-self-care](http://YogaRoomAnnArbor.com/online-courses-self-care).

## SUNDAYS

**Bach Flower Remedies Level 1 Live Web** – 3rd Sun. Learn how to use the 38 Bach flower remedies to help yourself and others conquer fear, worry, overwhelm, low self-esteem, lack of focus, poor concentration, trouble sleeping and more. With Nancy Buono, BFCP, Director of Bach Flower Education. [BachFlowerSchool.com](http://BachFlowerSchool.com).

**Hudson Valley Humane Society Rescue Reading** – 10am-12pm. Includes humane education lessons, group read-aloud and dog meet-and-greet. Drop-off event. \$10; space limited. [HSHV.org/RescueReading](http://HSHV.org/RescueReading).

**Clearing Meditation** – 11am. 4th Sun. Each person gets one question answered for healing an issue. In person. Troy. RSVP required: 248-789-1980.



**Online Meditation from Anywhere** – 11am-12pm. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: [CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com](mailto:CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com) or [DeepSpring.org](http://DeepSpring.org).

**Sunday Talk with Demo Rinpoche** – 11am-12pm. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. [JewelHeart.org](http://JewelHeart.org).

**Common Cycle Bike Repair Sessions** – 11am-3pm. Learn about bike repair, share tools and build a sense of community. Volunteers ready to assist with maintenance issues or personal projects. 416 W Huron St, Ste 11, Ann Arbor. 734-619-0907. [CommonCycle.org](http://CommonCycle.org).

**Inspiring Talk by Mata Yogananda** – 7pm. Spiritual talk, pure meditation and silent prayer, with Winged Prayer for all in need at 9pm. Free. Self-Realization Meditation Healing Centre, 7187 Drumheller, Bath. 517-641-6201. [SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org](http://SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org).

## MONDAYS

**Senior Summer Discount Days: People's Food Co-op** – Thru Aug. A special 10% discount for seniors aged 65 and older. 216 N 4th Ave, Ann Arbor. 734-994-9174. [PeoplesFood.Coop/newsite](http://PeoplesFood.Coop/newsite).

**Weekday Morning Online Meditation** – Mon-

Fri. 7:30-8am. Insight Meditation Ann Arbor offers a 30-min online group sitting via Zoom. Free; donations gratefully accepted. [InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org](http://InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org).

**Beginner Tai Chi** – 10-11:15am. A series of postures linked together in a fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). \$195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. [PeacefulDragonSchool.com](http://PeacefulDragonSchool.com).

**Soul Power Mystic Arts** – 5pm. 2nd Mon & Wed. Re-claim the real you, hear your evolutionary calling, and cultivate the nature mystic within through 4 retreats, individual training, self-acceptance process, nature qigong, plant ally ceremonies and body-ecology psychology. Sliding scale. Mother Bear Sanctuary, 20470 Barton, Pinckney. 734-796-6690. [MotherBearSanctuary.com](http://MotherBearSanctuary.com).

**Meaningful Mondays** – 8pm. SevaLight Retreat Centre warmly welcomes everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices and traditions, to join us virtually. Will gather on video conference sharing in song/chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer. Free. Email by 10am any Mon to receive the info about how to join by video: [Info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org](mailto:Info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org).

## TUESDAYS

**Senior Discount Tuesdays: Castle Remedies** – Customers over the age of 65 can receive a 10% discount on their in-store purchases. In the Parkway Center, 2345 S Huron Pkwy, Ann Arbor. 734-973-8990. [CastleRemedies.com](http://CastleRemedies.com).

**Online Meditation from Anywhere** – 9-9:30am. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: [CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com](mailto:CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com) or [DeepSpring.org](http://DeepSpring.org).

**Hypnotherapy** – 9:30am-7pm, by appt. Also Wed. Cheryl Beshada teaches and specializes in personal empowerment, releasing blocks and patterns of negative behavior, higher self-communication. Free consultation. Warren. 586-899-9009.

**5 Hidden Gems in Your Normal Blood Work** – 8-9pm. 3rd Tues. Join Dr. Jena for her Bloodwork Webinar and learn 5 hidden gems that can help you go from unhealthy to healthy. Free. [BigBeautifulChiropractic.com](http://BigBeautifulChiropractic.com).

## WEDNESDAYS

**Get the Most from Your DNA Test** – 6-8pm. Learn what you can do with your results and what additional opportunities are available for discovering your genetic genealogy. Understand the science, how to find information and how to share that information. Course 39651. \$59. Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E Huron River Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-677-5060. [wccnet.edu/noncredit](http://wccnet.edu/noncredit).

**Your Lipid Panel:** What Bad Cholesterol Really Means – 8-9pm. 3rd Wed. Grab your latest blood-

work and let's dive into your bloodwork and let me teach you how to look for hidden answers. Free. BigBeautifulChiropractic.com.

## THURSDAYS

**Class Observation** – 11-11:45am. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

**Qigong: Basics** – 11:15am-12:15pm. Class introduces participants to basic self-care stretches, breathing, meditations and self-acupressure for reducing muscle tension, increasing mindfulness, and revitalization. \$180. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

**Beginner Tai Chi** – 6-7:15pm. A series of postures linked together in fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). \$195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

**Thursday Hills of Ann Arbor** – 6:30pm. We ride some of the best hills A2 has to offer. A/B/C: 10-40 miles. Start at Wheels in Motion, 3402 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor. WheelsInMotion.us.

**Thursday Evening Silent Meditation** – 6:30-8:15pm. With Insight Meditation Ann Arbor. Free; donations gratefully accepted. Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W Liberty St, Ann Arbor. 734-994-4455. InsightMeditation AnnArbor.org.

**Sounds & Sights on Thursday Nights** – Thru July 25. 6:30-8:30pm. Musical acts from across the spectrum (folk, bluegrass, Celtic, jazz, classical, country, Latin and everything in between) perform at separate stages. Free. Downtown Chelsea. 734-474-9178. ChelseaFestivals.com.



**The Thyroid Panel:** Get the Real Story of What's Happening with Your Thyroid – 8-9pm. 3rd Thurs. Learn how to find hidden answers in the blood-work that you already have so that you can finally get some answers as to why you feel the way you do. Free. BigBeautifulChiropractic.com.

## FRIDAYS

**Online: Prayer Power Hour** – 12-12:30pm. Prayer changes things. Our goal is simple: to love you, pray for you and introduce you to our loving Creator, the Great Healer. Free. Tinyurl.com/PrayerPowerHour.

## SATURDAYS

**Vintage Alley: 20+ Unique Vendors** – Thru Oct. 9am-4pm. Vintage jewelry, clothing, furniture, home goods and more. Original art and prints available. Always something new and exciting. 1515 Division St, Detroit. 313-666-0060.

**Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum and Baby Classes** – 6-7pm. Classes are held virtually online led by our top AID instructors utilizing state of the art visual aids and activities to keep it fun and engaging while presenting the latest evidenced based material on each topic. \$35/class. Childbirth-Classes.com.

 **Positive Intelligence**  
[positiveintelligence.com](http://positiveintelligence.com)  

### Your Mind is Your Best Friend. But it Can Also Be Your Worst Enemy.

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[dgormley23@outlook.com](mailto:dgormley23@outlook.com)  
**904.377.5789**

**Drum and Dance Jam** – 7:30-9pm. 1st Sat (Apr, May, June, Aug). Bring a drum with you or use a drum that is provided. \$5 donation requested at door. Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, 704 Airport Blvd, Ann Arbor. InterfaithSpirit.org.

## Classifieds

## HELP WANTED

**RELAXSTATION, VOTED A2'S BEST MASSAGE, IS HIRING!** Our massage therapists earn \$35K to \$40K annually as W-2 employees for a 30-hour (including breaks) weekly schedule. New location on Packard Street between Argus Farm Stop and the Buddhist Temple offers traditional full body massage as well as fully clothed table massage, plus onsite chair massage at UT and local businesses. Free parking. Friendly, diverse and supportive community of co-workers. Relaxstation.com. Ask for Carrie, 734-623-1951.

## SPACE AVAILABLE

**MASSAGE/BODYWORK ROOM FOR RENT WEST SIDE ANN ARBOR** for licensed massage and bodywork therapists. Income potential; accommodate 8-12 sessions a day; \$2,400-\$3,800/month income. Saturday through Wednesdays, rent dependent on days taken. Security deposit required. 3-6-month agreement length with renew options. Free parking right outside building, no stairs, ground floor, ADA-accessible, quiet, furnished, supportive surroundings. This is a lightly shared space in an ongoing massage therapy business. Plenty roomy with table, seating, shelving, and nice big window bringing in natural light. Call Mary Light, 734-769-7794.



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## Acupuncture

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2350 Washtenaw Ave, Ste 10, Ann Arbor  
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[EmanueleAcupuncture.com](http://EmanueleAcupuncture.com)



Rosanne Emanuele is the sole Japanese-style acupuncturist in Michigan. Her main focus is the highly effective Kiiko Matsumoto palpitory style where acute and chronic conditions improve. She draws from 26 years of practice. Clients enjoy the results they achieve from her individually assessed treatment. Her easy friendly manner makes her skill seem casual and second nature.

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[RosyGlowWellness.com](http://RosyGlowWellness.com)



Clinically certified aromatherapist offers holistic consultations with customized blends of professional quality essential oils. Trust Margo to help you understand the complicated world of aromatherapy. Her holistic approach can help you maximize your benefits from this powerful therapy and minimize side effects. Aromatherapy is a wonderful way to integrate natural healing into your life. Phone consultations are available.



## Biological Dentist

### ANN ARBOR'S DENTIST

Dr. W. K. Dobracci, DDS  
606 W Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor, 48103  
734-747-6400  
[DrDobracci@AnnArborsDentist.com](mailto:DrDobracci@AnnArborsDentist.com)  
[AnnArborsDentist.com](http://AnnArborsDentist.com)



Passionate about holistic care while utilizing Bio-Compatible materials and lasers. Our patients can elect to be free from fluoride, mercury and other harmful metals. Filling materials are tooth colored and both BPA & Bis-GMA free. We offer natural oral health products using fine essential oils, and free of gluten and preservatives. See ad page 3.

## Holistic Doctor

### DR. MALCOLM SICKELS, M.D.

210 Little Lake Dr, Ste 10, Ann Arbor  
734-332-9936  
[DrSickels.com](http://DrSickels.com)



Malcolm Sickels earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan, where he taught fellow medical students about different approaches to health. Board certified in Family Medicine and Holistic Medicine, he is in solo practice on the west side of Ann Arbor. Learn more at [Dr.Sickels.com](http://Dr.Sickels.com). See ads, pages 8 and 15.

## Holistic Mental Wellness

### CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE COUNSELING

Karen Kerr, LMSW  
2010 Hogback Road, Ste. 6E, Ann Arbor  
734-660-5610  
[Karen8Kerr@gmail.com](mailto:Karen8Kerr@gmail.com)  
[KarenPKerr.com](http://KarenPKerr.com)



In offering a caring, collaborative and supportive experience, I draw upon a holistic approach with a rich variety of practices designed to deepen awareness, uplift mood, manage stress and develop a stronger sense of self-worth, purpose, connection and joy in life.

## Homeopathic Pharmacy

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Serving Michigan for nearly 40 years. Castle Remedies offers over 1,000 homeopathic remedies as well as herbs, essential oils, flower essences, books, unique gifts and jewelry. We carry top-tier nutritional supplement brands such as Metagenics, Ortho Molecular, Xymogen, Integrative Therapeutics, Karuna, NOW, and more. Classes available online. See ad page 13.



## Lymphatic Bodywork/ Reiki

### ELEVATE MIND & BODYWORK

Sarah Girard BS, LMT  
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SarahGirard.lmt@gmail.com  
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Take your wellness & spiritual journey to the next level. Sarah combines traditional "medical" Manual Lymphatic Drainage techniques with Reiki healing, breathing guidance, visualization & intuitive listening. All sessions are heart-centered, gentle, and geared towards radical self-love. Request an appointment today.

## Mold Testing & Remediation

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MoldPro offers chemical-free mold remediation, independent certified mold testing, inspection and consultation services all over SE Michigan specializing in mold biotoxin illness clients.

## Nature-Oriented Meeting Space

**MICHIGAN FRIENDS CENTER  
AT FRIENDS LAKE COMMUNITY**  
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734-475-1892  
MFCenter.org/rent



We offer the holistic community a nature-oriented meeting space for workshops, meetings, counseling, yoga, youth groups and family gatherings. Main room accommodates 100, with two smaller classrooms and kitchen facilities. Hiking trails. Weekend rates range from \$200-\$400, additional for extensive grounds use, camping. See ad page 15.



## Neurofeedback

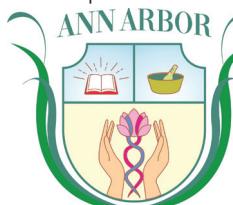
**NEW MOON NEURO**  
105 E. Middle Street, Chelsea  
734-210-1922  
NewMoonNeuro.com



Located within AL-CHEMY Holistic Collective, New Moon Neuro is the area's only IASIS Micro Current Neurofeedback Provider. Find lasting support for anxiety, depression, ADHD, insomnia, OCD, addiction, TBI, migraines, pain issues and more - for the entire family. See ad page 9.

## School/Education

**ANN ARBOR SCHOOL OF  
MASSAGE, HERBAL & NATURAL  
MEDICINE**  
734-769-7794  
NSHAAssociates@gmail.com  
NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net



SCHOOL OF MASSAGE, HERBAL &  
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ad page 9



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### THRIVE! WELLNESS CENTER

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Wellness Center

Shannon Roznay, DC, specializes in Nutrition Response Testing and Activator Chiropractic. Thrive! also carries natural foods, skin and home products. See ad page 23.





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